A safety contract shows the student that this is serious stuff. That they themselves are responsible for their own well being and are signing a contract for that purpose. It’s important that the students share ownership and grasp the importance of consequence of action.

Preparation of every lab is paramount. Making sure all safeguards are in working order, making sure all required or possibly needed chemicals and equipment are available. Making sure that all lab areas are free from clutter and enforcing the idea of cleanliness. Reviewing all lab equipment use and diposal of specific chemicals that are being used. Demonstrating any important or potentially dangerous aspects of the lab (eg, using a Bunsen burner). Giving a suggested timeline for completion.

Another possibility as well is making the students write the procedure in numbered sequential order for your review before they start the lab. Even if students largely copy and just slightly paraphrase the method already listed at least there should be some understanding of what they are about to perform.

An ongoing lab should be constantly monitored for cleanliness, poor practice, incorrect use of material or equipment, unattended spills, unused goggles, shaky unsure hands and confused faces.